

## The Knowledge Bank at The Ohio State University

### Ohio State Engineer

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# Past, Present, Future

**F**EBRUARY is a month when we celebrate the birthdays of many famous Americans. As we consider these heroes of battle or science or government, we are impressed with the changes that have taken place since they lived. Also, we are impelled to look in imagination into the future for the changes that are sure to come.

George Washington had the mind of an engineer. At an early age, although with scant preparation, he was working as a surveyor. He was a remarkably capable general. His training was mostly that gained by experience, and his assets were common sense and determination. The same principles of strategy that Washington used, apply to the widespread operations of the present war, but the untrained volunteers of the Revolution bore small resemblance to the specially trained and toughened soldiers who win victories by feats of engineering skill. The precision instruments, the powerful and accurate weapons, the long distance operations, all these would have seemed unbelievable marvels to George Washington.

Abraham Lincoln would have found the hatreds between sections of our country far less bitter if the means of communication and travel had been as well-developed when he lived as they are today. Better acquaintance would have brought better understanding between distant parts of the country.

Henry Wadsworth Longfellow portrayed in "The Village Blacksmith" a quiet scene of his day, typical of an era far removed from the hurry of today. The simplicity of the preparation for travel by horse and carriage contrasts with the complicated care given automobiles, buses, trains, and airplanes.

So as we recall the achievements of the famous Americans of years ago who were born in February we cannot help wondering how they would have been impressed by the scientific advances that are so rapidly changing the life of all Americans. We try to imagine what their lives would have been if they had had the advantage of the new developments.

Although Charles Lindbergh came into prominence only a few years ago he has observed already many advances in the use of airplanes since his solo flight in the "Spirit of St. Louis". The maneuverability and stamina of the great bombers and transports being used every day now make the airplanes of seventeen years ago seem crude indeed.

We are tempted to draw imaginative pictures of the various ways in which our lives will be

influenced by the research of the future, by the powerful cyclotron and betatron rays, by new types of airplanes, by ceramic and chemical developments. The world of today, that would have seemed so marvelous to George Washington, will, before long, be as antiquated as the "Spirit of St. Louis."

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